5. Empowering of the Election Commission of India to fix Ceiling on Election Expenses before every general election:

Periodic revision of election expenses may continue to be done by the Central Government in consultation with the Election Commission of India as at present.

Failure of companies in fulfilling their statutory obligations

126. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that thousands of companies, which have been registered, have failed to file their annual reports and balance sheets and fulfil their statutory obligations;

(b) if so, the details thereof, regionwise;

(c) the steps taken by Government to trace the missing companies; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by Government to prevent such incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) and (b) The number of companies which have not filed their Annual Accounts for 1997-98 so far is given below regionwise:

Region	No. of companies (both Private Limited and Public Limited)
Northern	74339
Western	73180
Eastern	34673
Southern	65143

(c) and (d) A Special Cell has been constituted in the Department of Company Affairs to take action against vanishing companies which had raised capital through public issues in coordination with Securities Exchange board of India (SEBI). Regional Directors and Registrar of Companies have been directed to take steps in respect of companies which have received money through public issues and also to issue default notices to companies and their Managing Director, Whole-time Directors, Managers and Ordinary Directors which have not filed Annual Accounts and Annual Returns by due date.

Appointment of SCs and STs as Supreme Court Judges

127. SHRI N. R. DASARI:
SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that theHon'ble President has recommended that persons belonging to weaker sections of society like SCs and STs and women be given due consideration in the appointment of Supreme Court Judges; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard and what efforts are being made to identify eligible persons from these categories for appointments to various courts, as judges?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI M. THAMBI DURAI): (a) and (b) Correspondence exchanged between the Constitutional authorities on appointment of Judges is confidential in nature and, therefore, cannot be disclosed.

The appointment of Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts is made in terms of Article 124 and Article 217 of the Constitution of India respectively, which do not provide for reservation for any caste or class of persons. The Government have, however, addressed letters to the Chief Ministers of the States and the Chief Justices of the High Courts from time to time requesting them to locate suitable persons from the Bar belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other Backward Classes, Minorities and Women for appointment as High Court Judges.

Expressway between Calcutta and Guwahati

128. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state: (a) whether Government propose to build an Express Highway between Calcutta and Guwahati;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the details of proposals finalised to provide better road linkage to North- East;

(d) the present status of still well road used during World War II to link Central Myanmar *via* NH-37;

(e) whether Government propose to improve and reintroduce this road; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) To provide better road linkages in the North-East region, five new national highways have been declared in January, 1999 as per details given below:

	NH No.	Section	States	Length (Kms.)
(i)	54	Daboka-Silchar	Assam	290
(ii)	150	Aizawal-Imphal-Kohima	Mizoram	141
			Manipur	523
			Nagaland	36
(iii)	62	Baghmara-Dalu	Meghalaya	65
(iv)	40	Jowai-Dawki	-do-	55
(v)	44A	Sairang-Manu	Mizoram	165
			Tirpura	65

(d) to (f) The Central Government is primarily responsible for the development and maintenance of national highways only. Since the Still Well Road linking Assam-Nagaland to Myanmar is a State road, its development is the responsibility of the State Government.

कांडला की सड़कों की स्थिति में सुधार लाने के लिए वित्तीय सहायता

129. **श्री राघवजी:** क्या जल-भूतल परिवहन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह सच है कि कांडला पत्तन न्यास ने कांडला और उसकी निकटवर्ती सड़कों की खराब स्थिति में सुधार लाने के लिए 6.00 करोड़ रुपयों का एक प्रस्ताव मंत्रालय को भेजा था;

(ख) यदि हां, तो क्या यह स्वीकार कर लिया गया था; और

(ग) यदि नहीं, तो इसके क्या कारण हैं, और क्या मंत्रालय चक्रवात के कारण सड़कों को हुए भारी नुकसान को देखते हुए प्रस्ताव पर पुनर्विचार करेगी और इसे स्वीकार करेगी?

जल भूतल परिवहन मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (डा. देवेन्द्र प्रधान): (क) जी हां।

(ख) और (ग) वह प्रस्ताव स्वीकार नहीं किया जा सका क्योंकि सड़कों के रख-रखाव की जिम्मेदारी स्थानीय सरकार/नगरपालिका की है।

Financial restructuring of Mumbai and Kandla ports

130. SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the revival plan of Mumbai and Kandla Port Trusts and Cargo Berths;

(b) the time frame for implementing short-term revival plan;

(c) whether financial restructuring forms a part of revival plan and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether a long-term cooperate plan has been drawn for Mumbai and Kandla Port Trust?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Handing over of Kandla Land to Gujarat Government

131. SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that State Government of Gujarat has sent a proposal to Government for handing over the lands of Kandla area back to the Government of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by what time the land will be handed over to the Government of Gujarat?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) to (c) No, Sir. No proposal for handing over the lands of Kandla area has been received from the State Government of Gujarat.